

A JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

Vol. V, No. 2

Edited by James L. Clifford
Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.

April, 1945

Your editor has been very much moved by the immediate and overwhelming response to our recent request for renewed subscriptions to the JNL. And you may be sure that the many accompanying messages of commendation have been welcome. May we express again our deep appreciation and thanks.

Alas! your proof of continued interest comes just at a time when there may be longer intervals between issues. Your editor has just accepted a position in the English Dept. of Barnard College, Columbia Univ., which will necessitate a move to New York city sometime this summer. The problems of moving will leave little time for correspondence or gathering news.

But by autumn the JNL will be appearing regularly again -- we hope more worth-while in every way. (Dick Altick wonders what Dr. Johnson would have thought of a publication bearing his name being issued from an American women's college. What do you think? We personally have no intention of changing the title to the Thralian News Letter, as one reader has suggested).

In the meantime, there is the promised Swift Anniversary Number, planned for late summer. For this, J. R. Moore (Indiana Univ., Bloomington, Indiana) has generously agreed to serve as guest editor. So please send direct to him any notes about Swift investigations, queries, or news items. Let us gather together a complete listing of Swift research in progress in this country and England, together with suggestions and pertinent comments. Write to Moore if you have any ideas.

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RANDOM COMMENTS

We pass on some remarks occasion-

ed by various passages in recent issues. For example, Ernest Bernbaum describes himself as one "who, though an unreconstructed Romantic has been a life-long admirer of Pope, and sees in that no more inconsistency than in admiring both the Old Testament and the New." To which your editor, as an ardent Wordsworthian as well as a Johnsonian, heartily agrees.

Anent our anecdote of the remarks of the Pennsylvania Hotel hat-check girls after the recent MLA meetings, W. S. Lewis writes: "Should you review Barzun's new book you need say nothing more!"

Lewis, by the way, on March 1 gave an address on Horace Walpole at the Century Club in New York city.

A good blurb comes from Mary E. Knapp (Hamden, Conn.): "I understand that he who would be learned without ostentation and wise without expenditure will subscribe to the Johnsonian News Letter."

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A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Howard Mumford Jones recently began his review in the Chicago Sun of Joseph Wood Krutch's book: "The English critic and scholar, Mark Pattison, once remarked that an appreciation of Milton is the last achievement of a cultivated mind. In the same way it may be said that an appreciation of Samuel Johnson is a mark both of a maturing mind and of a maturing society. American interest in the Great Bear is a kind of index of the growth of American culture."

GROUP COMMITTEES

For Group VII the Nominating and Advisory Committee for next year is: J.R. Moore (Indiana) Chairman, Helen Sard Hughes (Wellesley), Cyrus Day (Delaware).

For Group VIII the Nominating and Advisory Committee is: J. L. Clifford (Lehigh) Chairman, J. M. Osborn (Yale), F. A. Pottle (Yale), G. Sherburn (Harvard), W.D. Templeman (Ill.).

The Bibliography Committee: L.A. Landa (Chicago) Chairman, A.T. Hazen (Hunter), J.E. Tobin (Fordham).

The Committee on Research Projects: A. D. McKillop (Rice) Chairman, R.C. Boys (Mich.), M.K. Woodworth (Bryn Mawr).

The following are committeemen who are now serving in the armed forces: R. P. Bond, J. H. Caskey, W.P. Jones, E.L. McAdam Jr., H. J. Pettit Jr., H. T. Swedenberg Jr.

In accordance with a motion passed at the Group VIII meeting last December, the Chairman, R.L. Greene has appointed the following as a Special Committee on Procedure for Rotation of Officers: J. M. Osborn Chairman, A.B. Harbage (Univ. of Pa.) J. R. Moore.

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MEMBERS IN SERVICE

Don Stauffer writes from Delray, Florida "Your August 44 JNL, with its enclosed line asking where I am and what doing, reached me today, having travelled via Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Palau catching up with me.

"I flew back Stateside after 14 months on various joint staffs in the Pacific. Am now on inactive status, feeling neither like a Marine nor a civilian.... I'll be back teaching at Princeton by July and my address is Dept. of English there. I was a cover to cover reader of JNL throughout the Pacific."

Ernest Mossner is still far north, and writes that he is "shivering out the war at 'First Base'". He adds "Any news of our friends in the academic world would be welcome." Why not drop him a line sometime? His address is Sgt. Ernest Mossner, Area HQ Co. (QM Section) APO 862, Care Postmaster, New York.

Gale Noyes writes from Washington "At last, though I'm not "The Christian Hero", I have attained the rank of Dick Steele."

Lieut. Walter M. Crittenden is still at the U. S. Navy Pre-Flight School, St. Mary's College, Calif.

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MORE REVIEWS OF KRUTCH

So many have expressed interest in our recent listing of early reviews of Krutch's Samuel Johnson that we add a supplement. Of course many newspaper accounts have eluded us, but we might mention what Ernest Bernbaum calls Vincent Starrett's "asinine bray" in the Chicago Tribune for February 25, in which he repeats all the old mistaken ideas about Johnson.

Of those in the quarterly publications the review by Fred Pottle in the Yale Review (Spring, 1945) appeals to us as the most thorough and judicious. We hope you all will read it. That by W.B.C. Watkins in the Sewanee Review finds the most flaws in the work. Two other excellent discussions are those by W. H. Irving in the South Atlantic Quarterly (Jan. 1945), and by J.C. Metcalf in the Virginia Quarterly. (Spring, 1945). One sentence from Metcalf's review may be quoted as an additional "Thought for the Day".

"Perhaps no other figure in English literature, except Shakespeare, more completely rewards the reader with wisdom fit for remembrance, or from whose sayings, mined from Boswell and other contemporary sources, there might be more profitably deduced a sane philosophy of life."

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

E. S. de Beer in late January sent an account of normal life in London. "The doodle-bugs provided us with a flow of fresh air that was pleasant enough in July and August; but alas we cannot turn it off in a rather north-easterly January (Now we occasionally hear the explosion of rockets; it's a queer succession of noises; they cause miniature earthquakes, which are rather hard on old houses). As a result we huddle round whatever heating we can produce, but even that is frequently ineffective.

"...The tiredness is a nuisance; I attribute it to work and diet. The latter is in many ways very good, but leaves one with too little to come and go on: one cannot risk missing a meal, or scimping one; a headache is a certain penalty. And the simple diseases, such as common colds, prove all but incurable.

De Beer writes that he is continuing to collect corrections for the D. N. B. If any of our readers can supply definite errors which have not been corrected, send them over to him at 11 Sussex Place, Regent's Park, London N. W. 1.

A. L. Reade writes that he is hopefully waiting for the final authority to grant permission for the reconditioning of his house, damaged in the "Blitz." He adds: "Tuesdays are still set apart for long tramps round the countryside."

O. D. Savage, the Hon. Secretary, sends an announcement of a luncheon to be given by the Johnson Society of London at Brown's Hotel on 17 March. The President, S. C. Roberts, will be in the chair, and various guests of honor will be present.

Announcement is also given of forthcoming meetings at the Parish House of St. Clement Danes. On 28 April there is to be the 15th annual general meeting, followed by an address on Sarah Siddons by Frederick Nixon, of the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild. On

26 May Arthur Kidd will give a lecture entitled "The Great Patriot."

THE NEW RAMBLER

The January, 1945 (No. 6) issue of The New Rambler, edited by William Kent and A. Lloyd-Jones, has just arrived. Included are many bits of news which may interest our readers.

Last October W. H. Graham read a paper to the society entitled "Oliver Goldsmith and his Masterpiece" which was described in the Manchester Guardian for 23 Oct.

On 13 Dec. a group from the society attended the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey. "The ceremony was witnessed by a large concourse of Khaki-clad visitors to Poet's Corner, some of them from our Dominions and the U.S.A." On Sunday, 17 Dec., a sermon on Dr. Johnson was delivered by the Revd. Ronald Park at St. Clement Dane's Parish House.

Another paragraph will undoubtedly touch many hearts. "Mr. William Kent has had the misfortune to be, for the third time, a victim of enemy action, and has lost his home and many volumes from a second library. He will be glad to hear from any reader who has books by or on Johnson to dispose of. He will also welcome reference to any bookseller who may have them for sale. His address is now 7 Gauden Rd., Clapham S. W. 4."

Future bibliographers will be interested in the notice of the presentation to the society by W. E. Havart of a sixty page manuscript consisting of all the references to, and imaginary articles by, Dr. Johnson in Punch from 1841 to 1891.

The articles in this issue of The New Rambler include: "The Johnson Essays" by Mrs. Roscoe; "Some Notes on Dr. Johnson's Hebridean Tour" (concluded) by W. H. Graham; "Dr. William Heberden" by W. E. Havart; "The Other Samuel Johnson" by A. Cunningham Burley; Another Johnson ~~Quiz~~ by R. Park; "Life in London in the 18th Century" by A. G. McArthur; "We Speak across

the World" (an account of a special transAtlantic broadcast from the London Johnson Society to the Boswell Club of Chicago on 13 Sept.) by O. D. Savage; "17 Gough Square" by A. Lloyd-Jones; "Varia" by N.C. Willard Connelly (Director of the American Univ. Union in London) in a recent letter makes an interesting distinction. In England, as he points out, there are many people who are not connected with universities, yet who make a hobby of minor scholarship on this or that great figure of the past. "Concentrated in London as they are these men and women are able to meet both frequently and conveniently, and to pursue their investigations either by private reading at home or by visits to the British Museum."

On the other hand, in the United States most of the literary and historical research is carried on by scholars in the colleges and universities, scattered all over the country.

The Johnson Society of London, Connelly shows, is an example of the English delight in amateur literary research, though he admits that a great many more people show up for the annual dinner than for the regular monthly meetings. But the attendance for the latter is usually fifteen or twenty, and these members are all serious readers and engaged in some modest research.

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A NEW BOOK ON SMOLLETT

George M. Kahrl's (Elmira) Tobias Smollett, Traveler-Novelist is about to be published by the Univ. of Chicago Press. Briefly, the book offers a fuller study than has heretofore been made of Smollett's travels, especially his career in the navy.

Further, the book summarizes his journalistic labors as they brought him into contact with the literature of travel. With this as a background of factual information, the book then traces the metamorphosis of this material into prose fiction, with special emphasis on Smollett's literary models and the

spirit in which he wrote.

In a recent letter Kahrl comments "I hope I have thrown some light on Smollett's residence in London as an alien Scot and that I have presented the Travels through France and Italy in a way that will lead others to read and enjoy the book as I have. There will be eight illustrations by Rowlandson never, to my knowledge, reproduced."

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LORD MONBODDO AND JOHNSON

A fictional account of a visit of Johnson and Boswell to Lord Monboddo in Scotland may be found in Lillian de la Torre's latest story in the March number of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. We know our readers will enjoy this amusing story about "Monboddo's Ape Boy."

The same author's Elizabeth Is Missing (an account of the celebrated Elizabeth Canning mystery) is announced by Knopf for publication May 14.

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AUCTION SALES

The Parke-Bernet Galleries announce that Part III of the John Gribbel collection will be sold April 16 and 17. Of chief interest to our readers will be a splendid group of Burns autographs including his famous letter to William Pitt attacking the injustice of taxes levied against Scotsmen, which Burns signed "John Barleycorn;" and the manuscripts of a number of his poems.

Also included in the sale are a series of eight letters by Dr. Johnson; the first edition of Blake's Night Thoughts with the plates colored by himself or his wife; the first edition of Walton's The Compleat Angler; and letters by Charles Lamb etc. The greater part of the collection has to do with American historical personages.

A very important sale -- that of the Frank J. Hogan Library -- will be held on April 24-25.

GUIDE TO COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Another bibliographical aid to English scholarship is planned for publication early next year, intended to be of service to teachers and students of comparative literature, and of American and English literature seen against sources and influences from other lands and from other aspects of culture; e.g. the arts, philosophy, science, folklore, etc.

This is the Guide to Comparative Literature and Intercultural Relations, publication of which is sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, the Association of American Colleges and the American Library Association. Arthur E. Christy (Columbia) is editor and George B. Parks (Queens) and James E. Tobin (Fordham) are assistant editors.

The volume will run to nearly 700 pages and will be divided into four sections: (1) Foreign literature (all nations and cultures), backgrounds and translated editions; (2) English literature (in relation to the contribution to it of non-English thought); (3) American literature (in relation to outside influences); (4) General studies on painting, history, astronomy, etc., as these forces have affected literature. All significant titles will be annotated (after the fashion of Paetow's Guide to Medieval History, by a staff of more than 200 contributors).

"The arrangements of Part 2, English literature, will be under mediaeval renaissance, 17th century, 18th century, Romantic, Victorian and contemporary headings, with Roger Sherman Loomis (Columbia), William R. Parker (Ohio St.), Allen Benham (Washington), Elisabeth Schneider (Temple), E. K. Brown (Chicago), and Fred Millett (Wesleyan) among the section editors.

"Of particular interest to eighteenth century scholars is the panel for this section. Material has already been forwarded on the

following topics: Art and Society: R. A. Aubin (N. J. College for Women); Journalism: Allen T. Hazen (Hunter); Poetry: Richard C. Boys (Michigan) and W.K. Wimsatt (Yale); Philosophy: Victor M. Hamm (Marquette) and R. B. Sewall (Yale); Science: George R. Potter (Calif.); and Travel: J. R. Moore (Indiana).

Material is forthcoming from Rene Wellek (Iowa), on Criticism; Howard Dunbar (N. Y. U.), on drama; William T. Morgan (Indiana), on History; and R. B. Heilman (La. St.) on American relationships. Additional titles have been supplied by L. I. Bredvold (Michigan) and Finley Foster (West. Reserve).

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A QUERY

Katherine Hornbeak (110 Livingston St., New Haven, Conn.) writes: "I wonder whether any of the readers of your Johnsonian News Letter could help me out in tracing an allusion in the epigraph of the Complete Works of James Woodhouse. (This book was not published until 1896 although Woodhouse died in 1820.) The epigraph runs thus:

'Peter's the People's Bard, but
I'll be more;
Unpension'd Poet-Laureat of the
Poor.'

Who was this Peter?"

Katherine Hornbeak is at present working on the relations of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu with James Woodhouse and Anne Yearsley (Lactilla); and on the business and philanthropic activities of the "Queen of the Blue-Stockings". We know she will welcome any out-of-the-way information bearing on these topics which any of our readers may turn up.

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The little publication of Goodspeed's Book Shop called The Month, for Jan. - Feb., 1945, contains an article on Johnson's letter to his wife of 31 Jan. 1740. A facsimile of the letter is included.

THE BOSWELL CLUB OF CHICAGO

Since commenting briefly in our last issue on the activities of the Boswell Club of Chicago, we have had a number of communications from Rousseau Van Voorhies (2459 Prairie Ave., Chicago, Ill.). We take off our hat to him, as one of the most enthusiastic and active Johnsonians in this country.

Van Voorhies represents Boswell in the Chicago Club, where each member is supposed to impersonate one of the Johnson circle, and is obviously as irrepressible and sociable as his famous counterpart. Inspired by him, the Club engages in multifarious activity, usually described in the Chicago press.

One of its most active adjuncts is the Boswell Institute, inspired by the passage in Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides for Aug. 25, 1773, when the two travellers humorously discussed the possibility of the club coming to St. Andrews, as a college. You will remember that Johnson entered fully into the spirit of the project, and they fell to distributing the offices among the members.

The present Institute carries on the fun of the proposal, and now issues honorary degrees, at first the FRUSTRATIONIS DOCTOR, and more recently SAPIENTIAE MUNDANAE DOCTOR. The former has recently been granted to a number of people, celebrated and otherwise -- among the list being President Hutchins of Chicago, Lord Halifax, Bennett Cerf, Joseph Wood Krutch, A. Lloyd-Jones of the London Society.

The diploma for the degree is based upon the original bestowed upon Dr. Johnson by Oxford Univ.; and was composed by B. L. Ullman, the eminent Latin Scholar, and President of the American Classical League. We wish we had space to quote it all for you. It is signed by Sam: Johnson, James Boswell, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, David Garrick, and Edmund Burke.

Concerning the newest degree of the Institute, its monthly publication The Rambler has this to say:

"Now the Boswell Institute, recognized internationally as the outstanding educational institution in the field of frustration, is launching out into a kindred field of learning, that of Worldly Wisdom, as so brilliantly espoused by that great Spanish scholar of the 17th century, Baltasar Gracian, the Dale Carnegie of his epoch.

"Our research has shown us that the great majority of people are saps, but if a subject be taken in due time, and if he will in due humility admit his frustration, not only does he get a degree of frustration, but he is on the way to wisdom, to sapience... So from Sap to Sapience is the sage Pilgrim's Progress. Q.E.D. Doctor of Worldly Wisdom.

"Therefore, the Boswell Institute, with the advent of spring, has duly authorized its faculty to confer the honorary degree of SAPIENTIAE MUNDANAE DOCTOR, Doctor of Worldly Wisdom, upon those scholars duly qualified by their mastery of frustration and their success in the good life."

We will hope to have more news from the Chicago Boswell front in our next issue.

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A WALPOLE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen Hazen (Hunter), who is just beginning a complete bibliography of the published works of Horace Walpole, sends in the following little query: "Do you remember that Johnson said of Milton 'Why a writer changed his bookseller a hundred years ago, I am far from hoping to discover'; but I am wondering why the 1st edition of Horace Walpole's Letter from Xo-Ho, which is always recorded as published by Graham, should be 'Printed for N. Middleton.' And Middleton is not in Plomer!"

Hazen also adds: "Does anyone know of any vellum copies in America of the Castle of Otranto (1791 or later editions)? The Huntington Library has one. Are there any others?"